

Student Staffed Writing and Math Labs for MS and US

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Who We Are

Cathy Davis – Current Math Tutor, Current Math Lab Coordinator, Former Upper School Math Teacher, Former Upper School Division Head, Former Curriculum Lead, Former Scheduler of Upper School Classes; been with SA since 1989

Jennifer Gunn – Current Writing Tutor, Current Writing Lab Coordinator, Former 7th grade English teacher, Former 10th grade English and Honors English teacher, Former Yearbook Advisor, Former English Department Chair

Hollie Marjanovic – Current Upper School Learning Facilitator since 2016

School Population and Schedule Info

- 300 Students in Upper School

- 300 Students in Middle School

- 4 US English Teachers, 4 MS English Teachers; 4 MS Math teachers, 5 US Math Teachers

- Upper School runs a modified block schedule with 25 minutes of break and 40-50 minutes of lunch on Tuesday-Friday

- Upper School students have one study hall in their schedule

- 5th/6th grades and then 7th/8th grades have their own schedules; also with breaks and lunches which do not coincide with Upper School

- Middle Schoolers have study hall from 2:30-3:00pm most days

- Shared library space

What is a Student Staffed Writing or Math Lab

A group of students who are trained by their respective lab coordinator to tutor students in math or writing. We try to limit our groups to 12-15 students.

Who are the Writing and Math Lab Coordinators?

1. Our current math and writing lab coordinators are former teachers from our school who KNOW our curriculum and understand our student population. Both continue to tutor, sub, and have even come back to teach in various capacities for short term assignments.
2. Our school has agreed to pay them as contract employees and they work at an hourly rate and will usually put in 5-10 hours per month.
3. Some schools might opt for a current teacher who does not have a full load.

Who are the Writing or Math Fellows

1. Group of student “fellows” who are selected annually based on their application and teacher recommendations.
2. They are asked to tutor for at least one session weekly
3. They must attend a summer orientation
4. They must attend regular training sessions throughout the school year
5. They receive 25 hours of service to the school (counts toward service hour graduation requirement) per year for their service
6. We now open the process to grades 9-12 (starting with rising 9th graders)
7. We have found that 9th graders work well with the Middle Schoolers who need tutoring

Our Current Setup for Math Lab

Math Lab for Upper School Students meets during the last 30 minutes of lunch on Wednesdays

Math Lab also has appointments of math fellows during study halls to tutor individually or in small groups

Math Lab for Middle Schoolers meets during the last 30 minutes of the school day twice per week for grades 5-8 (only 6th and 7th grades have students attending)

Our Current Setup for Writing Lab

Writing Lab Fellows are available to help students during study halls.

Writing Lab has an online essay editing service through Google Docs

Writing Lab has sponsored specific workshops for various papers and writing assignments.

Examples: A large assembly on how to prepare for an exam essay, how to prepare for exams, small lunch tutorials on writing specific papers

Writing lab has “pushed” in to classes (typically history and English) to help with specific essays

How Are Students Referred to Writing or Math Lab

1. Some teachers will incentivize students to use lab services by offering extra credit
2. Some teachers will require students to attend and will let us know via being cc'd on an email to the student
3. Some teachers will send the Learning Facilitator the names of those who need to attend and she will contact the students

Sample Letter to Student

Sample Letter

Your math teacher has recommended that you attend math lab this week.

Math lab is a fantastic weekly opportunity to have math support from Ms. Davis, our math lab coordinator, and our math student fellows.

Please plan on reporting to room SC2 tomorrow (Wednesday) at 11:40am. You may bring your lunch with you. Please also bring your math textbook, binder, and homework. We look forward to seeing you!

Best,

Mrs. M

Challenges

1. Schedules
 - a. Student Schedules
 - b. Alignment of MS and US Schedules
 - c. Changing Schedules because of an assembly, pep rally, etc
 - d. Sports schedules with early dismissals that mean students can't attend
2. Overcommitment
 - a. Students can overcommit and then will back out
3. Getting Information to and from Faculty
 - a. Paper dates, information
4. Student Attendance
 - a. Students who are required to attend can sometimes be resentful.

The Writing Center

Whom we serve:

- Middle school students (usually scheduled lunches and study halls)
- Upper school students (scheduled, virtual, walk-in)
- Faculty (classroom help)

How we serve:

- Mentor and coach writers across disciplines (English, History, Math, Science, Arts, etc.)
- Provide additional support for teachers in classrooms (while teachers are absent, when editing occurs, and helping students work in groups)
- Give virtual assistance on papers (editing and advising on first two pages until an appointment is completed)

The Writing Center



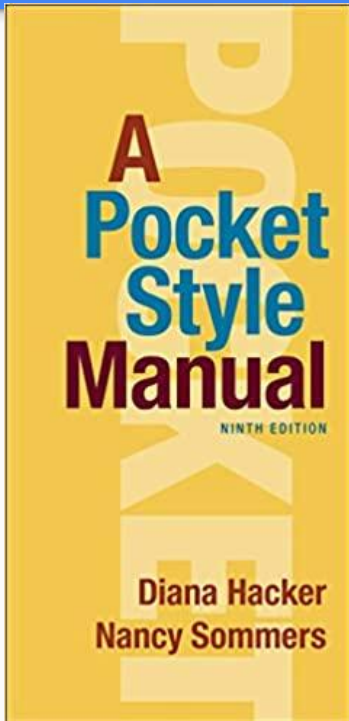
Weekly meetings

- Take attendance and run through assignments that might be coming into the lab. (teachers send these)
- I try to bring treats to encourage attendance and to make the time “happy and inviting” for them.
- I try to have one training item of the week. Research tips, common grammar issues, creative writing help etc...
- Journal (if time allows, but it rarely does)
- We plan sessions we want to have (like in-class essay writing and competitions to encourage and foster a writing community).

What does the WL Coordinator do?

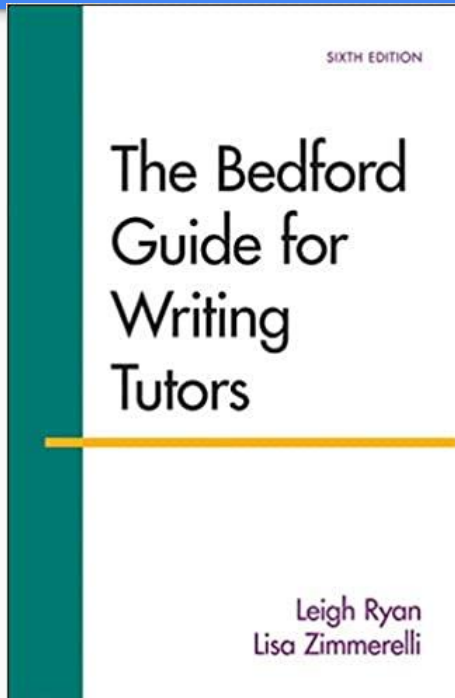
- LOTs of scheduling: Students, teachers, and even parents will contact me looking for instructional help.
- I look at schedules for students and tutors. This can take a bit of time for middle school because the schedules are different. Emails are sent to tutors and students every time a paper is submitted, so that they know I'm aware of when/where tutoring is supposed to happen. (It holds everyone accountable for finishing essay reviews).
- I pick up lots of the online editing/reviewing because sometimes, tutors just cannot get to it.
- I create documents to help the tutors and for specific students.
- Last year, I did some in-person tutoring as well because I was on campus three days a week.

Resources every writing lab needs...



This book is by far the easiest guide to citations both in-text and works cited pages. It has MLA, APA, and Chicago style. It also has quick guides to common grammar problems.

Resources every writing lab needs...



This book is essential for teaching tutors/fellows to understand the ethos behind a writing center.

It's not about the product; it is about the process.

It helps students understand the goal of the center is to teach how to write...not how to get A's.

Link to materials to help

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1a6zeu0uA4-GsiRTxm-zXgjGt8JMA68ba?usp=share_link

Math Lab Purposes:

Purposes:

- One time help with a problem about which a student is stumped or struggling
- Short term help before or after a test a quiz
- Long term support for students for whom math is not their strength

Communication with Math and Science Faculty

Math and Science Faculty:

- Talk about Math Lab at the beginning of the school year as another opportunity for help and support
- Let me know when you have a test or quiz coming up that you know students could benefit from extra help
- Refer students for weekly support during a study hall
- Have a Fellow come into your classroom as extra support while reviewing for a test or quiz or for circulating to provide help during classwork time
- Let me know if you are noticing a particular weakness in your students in a foundational concept - fractions, factoring, etc
- I will communicate with you based on my own observations when I work with a student or from conversations with and notes from Math Fellows

Math Lab Availability

Lab availability:

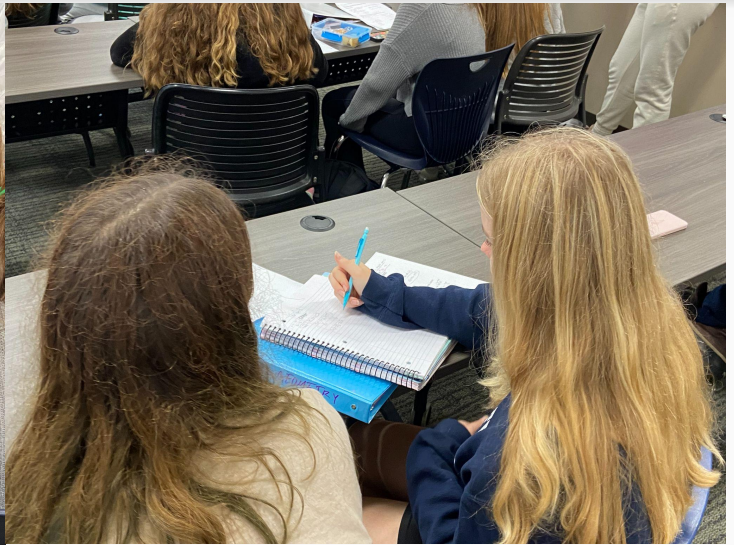
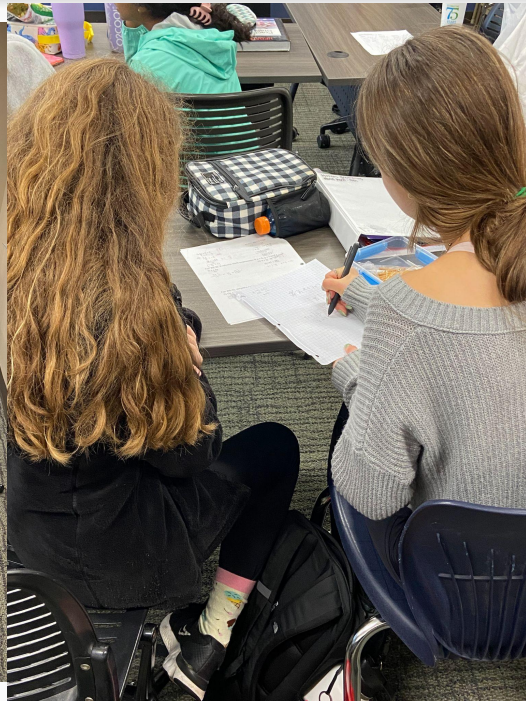
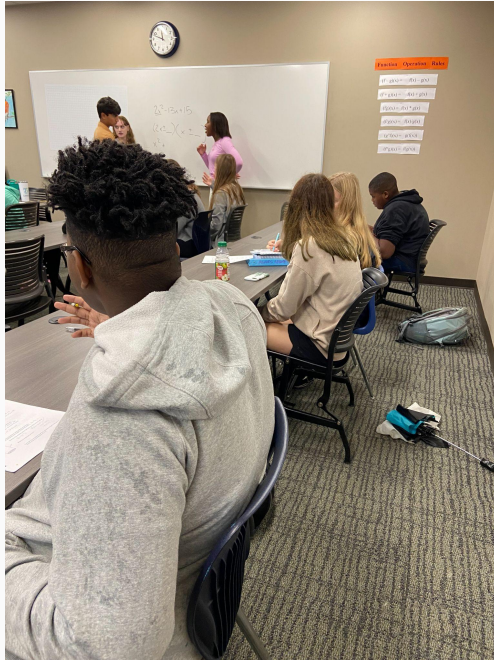
- Study Hall schedule will be set during the first couple of weeks of school based on availability of Fellows
- Once a week lunch help was very successful last year. When that time is set, faculty can assign students to attend. I always let you know who attended.

Math Lab Fellows

Math Fellows:

- Students who are solid math students in their own studies but those who communicate clearly and have the desire to help others learn
- Training sessions -
 - learn to be coaches and not displayers of their own knowledge of math
 - Review basic math concepts and how to explain them
 - Learn to discern what a student may be struggling with - new concept or supporting concept from past
- Weekly meetings
 - What is coming up in certain classes, therefore what might be asked in math lab
 - Scheduling help in classrooms
 - Adjustments to Lab schedule

Math Lab Photos



Math Lab Documents

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16m0ta_ip5Tp4MC1Ij5k1QeAsqFVp6fxi?usp=share_link